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Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i*; *sheni dsili ghmert'i*, "my part of God," "thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, "mother" constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes "father and mother of goats", i.e. "(fore)parents of goats", or "god of goats". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes "father and mother of cows", i.e. "(fore)parents of cows".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from "many mothers-gods" arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes "mother", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zhwab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *dsitswa*, as it should have sounded and does really sound "mothers". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Ves.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Anu*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

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which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*

1. *Jabrən*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrən*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "*dzw*" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "*dz*". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*ẓ*). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138. (A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.